VARTRAG TALE

CHAPTER 10

BY OKI MAMIYA

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TYPESETTER REMY

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ALWAYS OPEN TO NEW FREELANCERS
FINISHING OFF PROJECTS OF THEIR CHOOSING!

The Mad Cat of the Full Moon
~ Die irre Katze von dem Vollmond ~

"HEY, CAN'T I SAY HERE? I WANT TO STAY WITH ECK."
HM? THIS IS..
MASTER, THERE ARE SCRATCHES ON THE WALL?

Marked his height.
THAT WAS MADE WHEN RALPH CAME HERE.
THE LOWER ONE... LOOKS LIKE IT WAS DONE AT A MUCH DIFFERENT TIME, THOUGH. THE NEW ONE IS AN "R".
YEAH... BRING ME REAGENT D, NUMBER 5.
5? SURE.
FIGURES. YOU DON'T REMEMBER, HMM?
No way, the "B".
MINE!?
...IS THAT SO?
YOURS IS THERE TOO, RIGHT?
ABOVE AND TO THE SIDE.
!
HE MIGHT HAVE ONLY BEEN HERE A FEW DAYS, BUT IT SEEMS HE WANDERED THROUGH THE WHOLE CASTLE.
HE LET HIMSELF INTO THIS ROOM, LAB NUMBER 3.
MASTER RALPH'S ...

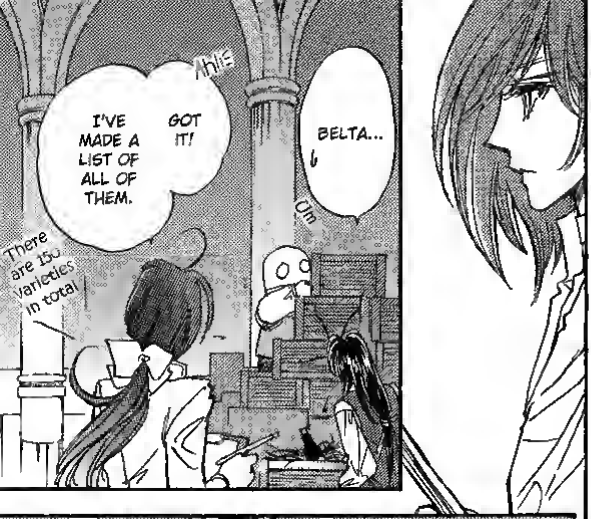
glub
THERE'LL BE A GREAT WAR STARTING SOON. STILL, IT PROBABLY WON'T LAST TEN YEARS.
NO IDEA. I HEARD HE WANTED TO JOIN THE MILITARY.
glub
glub
!
I WONDER HOW MASTER RALPH IS DOING.
BUT I DON'T WANT TO REMEMBER MY OLD SELF...
FROM WHEN I WAS LITTLE...? I DIDN'T KNOW.
Here, number 5.
Danke!
... MASTER.
YOU NEVER WOULD'VE TRIED TO GO ANYWHERE YOU WEREN'T ALLOWED, HMM?
IT'S STRANGE.
NO MATTER HOW GREATLY YOU ALTER THE COURSE OF HISTORY, BALANCE WILL ALWAYS BE RESTORED SOMEHOW.
BE IT IN TEN YEARS OR A THOUSAND..
YOU CANNOT FIGHT AGAINST THE MOVEMENT OF THE STARS.
WHETHER YOU'RE A HUMAN, ANGEL, OR DEMON, NATURE WILL TAKE ITS COURSE.
ALL WE CAN DO IS ENJOY THAT COURSE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ...
THE OUTCOME IS LIKE A DESSERT THAT FOLLOWS AFTER IT.
...DURING EXPERIMENTS,
MASTER VALAFAR BECOMES TALKATIVE.

It exploded when I mixed it in
PUFF
PUFF
IT SEEMS IT WAS THE WRONG REAGENT NUMBER ...
WHAT HAPPENED !?
...THAT'S ATTEMPT 756
BOM
POOF
Ahi?
HUH ...
THAT'S WHY I LIKE TIMES SUCH AS THESE,
SINCE HE'S USUALLY QUIET...
BELTA!
The kids in the city all have short hair, too
I GUESS IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR A GOOD CUT.
SO ARE YOUR BANGS, MASTER.
That's fine
LOOK, YOUR TIPS ARE SCORCHED. YOU'LL HAVE TO TRIM THEM LATER.
¿ UM...
IF YOU SAY SO, MASTER ...
!?
YOU CAN'T!

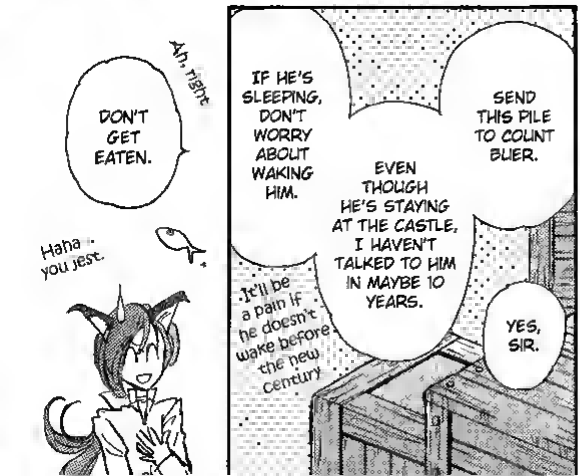
MASTER RALPH VOLUNTEERING FOR THE MILITARY—
I'LL LEAVE IT TO YOU.
... THEN I'LL RECORD THIS.
THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY.
... FORGET IT.
...

SO HE'S ALREADY OLD ENOUGH FOR THAT?
A GRE T W R...?
(I WONDER IF LORD ASTIN FORESAW IT?)
I WONDER IF HE'LL BE KILLED DURING HIS SERVICE?
Ralph's gonna die? Isn't that a good thing?
WILL MY MASTER BE OK...?
YOU...! WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT!?
Hallo
Really? Why?
I FOLLOW MY MASTER'S WISHES.
I NEVER ONCE THOUGHT LIKE THAT!
You don't want him coming back, not really. That kid'll steal your master away.
Because it's true, isn't it? If he dies as a human without a contract, he won't be able to come to this castle again.

Don't you actually have another "wish"?
Hey. you OK with that?
Because you're his "butler"?
Isn't that title just something he gave you later?
I DON'T!
AND IF I DID, IT WOULD BE ABOUT "LILITH'S BLOOD".
I WISH IT WOULD ALL BE GONE FROM INSIDE OF ME.
300 CRATES OF WINE ARRIVED?
clench
...UH!
fade
HMPH
You idiot!


Ahh
I'VE MADE A LIST OF ALL OF THEM.
GOT IT!
BELTA...
Um
There are 150 varieties in total

No, it's fine.
Shall I send them to him?
Yeah
I WON'T DRINK THIS.
REALLY?
WELL, HE'LL DROP BY SOONER OR LATER.
THEN, LORD ASTIN LIKES THEM.


Ah, right
DON'T GET EATEN.
Haha you jest.
IF HE'S SLEEPING, DON'T WORRY ABOUT WAKING HIM.
SEND THIS PILE TO COUNT BLIER.
EVEN THOUGH HE'S STAYING AT THE CASTLE, I HAVEN'T TALKED TO HIM IN MAYBE 10 YEARS.
It'll be a pain if he doesn't wake before the new century
YES, SIR.

AND WHAT IS OSE THINKING?
PILING THEM IN THIS SMALL HALL.

LORD BUER, PLEASE WAKE UP.
ZZZZZZZZZZ
ting
— THERE'S WINE!
AH... GRRRRRR
ZZZZ
.....
WAKING THE NOBLES IN THIS CASTLE, I SWEAR ...
SIGH
I guess I'm lucky I just got nabbed?

Guten Morgen!
LORD BUER,
THE CENTURY'S OVER!
blink
poof
THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR THAT!
wiggle
The part that was singed.
IT REALLY IS A LITTLE SHORTER.
Man!
MY TAIL ...
"I WISH I COULD STAY HERE FOREVER ..."
"THIS PLACE IS NICE."
THAT'S RIGHT, I HAVEN'T BEEN IN THIS ROOM FOR A WHILE...

I LIKE HIM. HE'LL BECOME MINE.
LORD VALA-FAR!
CARE TO BET ON IT, BELTA?
THAT MOMENT ...
HE SAID HE WANTED THAT CHILD TO BE AT HIS SIDE.
NO...
IT MAKES ME REMEMBER EVEN THE THINGS I WANT TO FORGET—
"CAN'T I STAY HERE?"
HASN'T THAT ALREADY HAPPEN-ED?
BUTLERS DON'T HAVE FEELINGS LIKE THIS!
"HAVING ONE OF LILITH'S BLOOD GROW UP WOULD BE A NUISANCE."
STOP.
... UH.

stare
Ah!
YOU GUYS ARE GETTING ALONG WELL, IT SEEMS
...I'M SORRY.
... HUH?
PLEASE TELL ME, LORD BUER...
WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN LORD VALAFAR AND "LILITH" LONG AGO?
IF NOT, YOU WON'T GROW UP.
BUT YOU HAVE SOME ISSUE WITH GROWING UP THAT MUCH, RIGHT? IT'S ON YOUR FACE.
BLUSH
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT. ...IT'S JUST...
IT'S JUST THAT I'M...
I DON'T HAVE ANY ISSUE WITH IT...

AT COLMA CASTLE'S NORTHERN END IS "TRISHNA TOWER".
IT'S PACKED WITH THE MEMORIES OF ALL THE MASTERS OF THE CASTLE
IT'S NOT IDLE!
IDLE CURIOSITY WILL BE THE DEATH OF YOU...
YOU WOULD KNOW, WOULDN'T YOU?
I'VE STUDIED ALL THE DOCUMENTS AND BOOKS IN THE CASTLE.
I'VE ALWAYS SUFFERED WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING THE REASON I'M SHUNNED...
IF IT WEREN'T FOR MY BLOOD, I WOULDN'T BE LIVING HERE. I HATE IT! BUT, WHY...?
I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND... BUT I HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW!!
I... I'M SORRY!
I JUST ...
Oh!
...!

"TRISHNA TOWER"...
WELL, THAT'S IF YOU CAN GET IN SAFELY
THERE ARE STILL PLACES WITHIN THE CASTLE I'VE NEVER BEEN TO...
THE PLACE THAT WAS PROTECTED BY VALAFAR'S COAT OF ARMS...
WHAT IF I WENT THERE...?
Man
WHAT'S WITH THE ELABORATE BARRIER?
It was full of holes, though
IT'S NOT LIKE ANY OF THOSE WEAK DEMONS YOU KICKED OUT WERE CAUSING A FUSS.
Yap
HOW ABOUT YOU COME IN THROUGH THE ENTRANCEWAY EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE?
THE ONE FULL OF WINE CRATES? I'LL PASS.
HMPH

...YOU'RE AS FLIPPANT AS EVER.
YOU DOING WELL? YOU'VE BEEN PRACTICING THAT GLUM LOOK OF YOURS, VALA.
I WONDER IF HE SAID HELLO TO YOU?
THAT'S RIGHT, I CAME ACROSS ZAGAN NOT LONG AGO.
So you know...
slam
AHAHA
... ASTIN!
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE STILL TIED TO OUR YOUTHFUL DAYS THAT ARE SO FAR BEHIND US.
Well, he's a little off-target.
HIS GOAL ISN'T BAD...
Buenos Tardes
fwsh

IT'S BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO DO, VALA. HOW ABOUT WORKING SOME?
ASTIN, I DON'T JUST LOOK GLUM.
I'M IN A BAD MOOD.
...I CAN'T BELIEVE MY EARS.
HMPH
OR IS THERE SOMEONE ELSE ALSO TYING US TO THOSE DAYS?
I'M SERIOUS. THE WAR ON EARTH WILL BE BIG THIS TIME.
DON'T BE LIKE THAT. SOONER OR LATER IT'LL ENGULF THE WHOLE WORLD.
NOT INTER-ESTED.
FIGURE OUT IF YOU'RE RETURNING TO GERMANY OR STAYING IN ENGLAND.
THOUGH GERMANY IS GOING TO LOSE
AND WITH THIS WAR, THE LONG-NEUTRAL EL WILL TAKE ACTION.
I IMAGINE OUR EMPEROR WILL SUMMON YOU SOON. GO.
FIGURES THAT YOU COMING HERE WOULD BE NOTHING GOOD.

AND TAKE BELTA WITH YOU. LET IT BE KNOWN HE'S YOUR COMPANION.
IF YOU WARN THE RULING CLASS TO KEEP THEIR HANDS OFF OF HIM, THERE'LL BE LESS OF A FUSS.
...
NOW, DON'T SAY THAT.
IT'S A GOOD OPPORTUNITY. VISIT YOUR OLD HAUNTS.
VALA.
YOU CAN'T HIDE IN THE CASTLE FOREVER.
YOU KNOW...
AM I SUPPOSED TO VISIT GUYS LIKE THAT JUST FOR FUN?
...I'M NOT REALLY HIDING.
hmph
FIRST OF ALL ...
WHAT WOULD I SAY TO HIM?
TO BELTA...

I'VE WONDERED ABOUT "TRISHNA TOWER" BEFORE,
BUT I COULDN'T GET PERMISSION FROM MY MASTER.
SHOULD I STOP AND ASK HIM?
tap
THAT WAS POORLY DONE ...
tap
NO MATTER HOW LONG HE'S BEEN HERE, COUNT BUER IS A GUEST.
OR GO A LITTLE FARTHER...
tap
AFTER ALL THIS TIME... WHAT SHOULD "VALAFAR" SAY——

WHAT NOW? I'D JUST INTERRUPT THEM. MAYBE JUST SAY HELLO...
LORD ASTIN? WHEN DID HE...?
HM, A GUEST?
I KILLED THEM.
WE DID, VALA.
MASTER?
HOW MANY HUNDREDS? IT WAS MY ORDER.
TO ROOT OUT ALL OF LILITH'S RELATIVES...

Supplied the dirk.
How rude.
I WISH I'D NEVER GOTTEN MY HANDS ON THAT POINTLESS DIRK.
THAT'S NOT THE PROBLEM! I'M SAYING THAT IF YOU WANT TO PROTECT YOUR TERRITORY, DO SOME WORK EVERY SO OFTEN.
HAVING AFFAIRS AND TAKING FANCIES IS A VIRTUE OF US DEMONS. THINGS ARE ALREADY MOVING.
OR AT THIS RATE, WILL I SURRENDER TO THE FLOW OF TIME...?
I KNEW...
BUT IF I ASK HIM AGAIN...
HERE I AM... TRISHNA TOWER.
THE DOOR WAS SEALED AGES AGO.
IT HURTS SO MUCH.

"THIS IS LILITH?"
"YOU'RE A RELATIVE OF LILITH, RIGHT?"
"A 'LILITH HUNT'..."
LI-LILITH !!
I'M NOT SAD. I'M MORTIFIED.
MASTER BECAUSE I'M HERE,
YOU COULD NEVER ADMIT YOUR PAST.
LILITH ...
AND YET——
SLAM
slam
slam
slam
I DON'T KNOW LILITH!
I'M ME!
I DON'T WISH FOR ANYTHING !!
SO WHY...

COME WITH ME, BOY!
I'M FAA CALDELAS, HEAD OF THE GYPSIES HERE.
FWOOM
Fa
ha
ha
FOUND YOU!
YOU WERE HIDING OUT IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?
CAN I NEVER ESCAPE IT...?
...UH!
NO MATTER HOW QUIET I AM,
EVERYONE WILL SEE THE "LILITH" INSIDE OF ME...!!

THIS IS LILITH!?
WHAT A FIND. LET'S HAVE SOME FUN.
I'M AFRAID ...
WHAT IS IT YOU WISH FOR?
I HATE EVERYONE.
THERE'S NO WAY I'M GOING TO GROW UP!
NO ONE LOOK AT ME EVER AGAIN!!
"HOW STRANGE. YOU..."
"JUST WHERE DID YOU WANDER IN FROM?"
mew

"A WHITE RIBBON WOULD LOOK GOOD ON YOU."
"I'M ALONE TOO."
"YOU CAN STAY IN THIS CASTLE AS LONG AS YOU WANT."
"YOU HAVE RUBY RED EYES, HUH."
...WHERE AM I?
...IT SMELLS LIKE FLOWERS?

WELCOME
TO THIS LONELY CASTLE, THIS THIRSTY TOWER.
YOU MEAN A GREAT DEAL TO THE MASTER OF THIS CASTLE, SO I LET YOU IN.

THE NAME HE HOLDS DEAR...
IS "ECKBERT".
HEY, VALA-FAR
LOOK WHO'S COME, A CUTE GIRL WITH THE SAME RED HAIR AS ME.
hehe
VALAFAR? ...NO, IT'S NOT MY MASTER.
AND THIS WOMAN—
...WHO ARE YOU?
DEAR,
HAVE YOU ALREADY MET THAT CHILD?
...IT COULDN'T BE.
DON'T YOU THINK THOSE BLACK WINGS ARE LIKE A DRESS?
YOU'RE SO CUTE WHY IS YOUR HAIR TIED BACK?
I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING EXTRA SPECIAL.
EXTRA SPE-CIAL.

"TELL ECK!"
DON'T MAKE ME REMEMBER.
"SOMEONE CALLING ME THAT AGAIN."
"ME..."
SO I WANTED AN EXCUSE.
IT'S ONLY NATURAL.
THIS HAIR... IS ANNOY-ING.
rustle
IT'S NOT AS THOUGH I WISHED TO COME TO THIS CASTLE.
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING.
MY DUTIES AS A BUTLER TO ST Y ON HERE...
ARE AN INCENTIVE FOR MY WRETCHED SELF.

WHERE AM I?
—THAT GROSS PHANTOM WOMAN IS MAKING ME REMEMBER THE SAME RED HAIR.
THESE PRECIOUS DAYS THAT HAVE PILED UP SEEM LIKE THEY'RE GOING TO DISAPPEAR RIGHT FROM UNDER ME...
IT HURTS...
WHERE ...
DID I PUT THOSE SCISSORS?

mutter
...BUT IT'S IN THE WAY.
BELTA?
I DID SAY NOT TO CUT YOUR HAIR
PLEASE GIVE IT BACK...
slide
I WANT TO ASK, "WHOSE SUBSTITUTE AM I?"
...NO, IT'S NOTHING.
SORRY, I DIDN'T HAVE ANY RIBBON ON HAND.
ALRIGHT, THIS'LL DO.
tug
THAT'S NOT LIKE YOU. ...TURN AROUND.
EVEN THOUGH I'M NOT QUALIFIED...

MY MASTER IS KIND...
I AM HERE.
I'VE NEVER THOUGHT OF IT AS IN THE WAY...
I REALLY DO THINK YOUR CAT TAIL IS BETTER LONG.
WHAT ARE YOU SULKING FOR? WHITE RIBBONS SUIT YOU.
Serious
I WONDER WHEN IT STARTED...
THAT I'VE COME TO BELIEVE THE THINGS THIS MAN SAYS.
—AND...

— SOMEONE, LISTEN TO ME.
I LOVE HIM THIS MUCH.
THAT THE MORE KIND MY MASTER IS, THE MORE MY HEART HURTS...
...
BELTA?
...IT'S NOTHING,
MY MASTER.